IN THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) A weight determining mechanism for a piece of luggage, the mechanism comprising:

a carrying device designed to engage a part of a human body;

at least one resistance mechanism having opposing first and second ends, wherein said resistance mechanism is altered by an application of force on said resistance mechanism whenever the piece of luggage is lifted via the carrying device, said resistance mechanism being coupled to the piece of luggage at the first end and the second end so that the weight of said luggage provides said application of force; and

at least one indicator viewable from an exterior of the of the luggage and responsive to alteration of said resistance mechanism when the luggage is lifted via the carrying device, wherein said indicator provides an indication of the weight of the piece of luggage.

2. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said resistance mechanism is selected from the group of a coil spring, a rotational dial, an elastic material, a magnetic component, an electrical component, a chemical component reactive to lifting of the ~~bag~~ piece of luggage, and an electromechanical element.

3. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said piece of luggage comprises one of a backpack, a suitcase, a briefcase, a computer bag, a duffel bag, an upright bag, a garment bag, and a shoulder bag.

4. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said carrying device comprises one of a carrying handle, a handle grip, a support, a ~~should~~ shoulder strap, and a hip strap.

5. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said carrying device is generally flexible.

6. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said resistance mechanism is attached to said piece of luggage via a mounting strip on one of said first and second ends, said mounting strip slidable relative to the piece of luggage when the piece of luggage is lifted via the carrying device.

7. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator is configured to display a first color corresponding to a first predetermined weight range, and a second color for a second predetermined weight range.

8. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a first indicator connected to said first end, and a second indicator connected to said second end.

9. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a digital display indicator.

10. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 further comprising a reset or re-zero button, thereby facilitating independent determination of a weight of the piece of luggage and a weight of items loaded into the ~~bag~~ piece of luggage.

11. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a series of non-numerical markings.

12. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 11 wherein said series of non-numerical markings are concealed within said carrying device until the piece of luggage is lifted, and said series of markings are selectively revealed to indicate ~~said~~ the weight of said piece of luggage.

13. (currently amended) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator further comprises a mounting strip coupled to the resistance element and slidable into and out of an interior region of the carrying device, the mounting strip provided with a plurality of color bands that are respectively revealed when the piece of luggage is lifted under increasing amounts of weight, each of said plurality of color bands corresponding to a predetermined weight range and

indicating a relative weight of the ~~bag~~ piece of luggage according to predetermined guidelines for a user.

14. (original) The mechanism of claim 13 wherein said color bands comprise bands of red, yellow, and green.

15. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 1 wherein said indicator comprises a series of numerical markings.

16-18. (cancelled)

19. (currently amended) A weight determining mechanism for a piece of luggage, the mechanism comprising:

means for lifting said piece of luggage, said means for lifting being an integral part of said piece of luggage;

means for determining the weight of said piece of luggage, in response to an applied force on said means for lifting;

means for providing an indication of ~~said~~ the weight to a user;

wherein said weight is distributed across said means for determining solely by lifting said means for lifting; and

means for resetting or re-zeroing the means for determining, thereby facilitating independent determination of a weight of the piece of luggage and a weight of items loaded into the ~~bag~~ piece of luggage.

20. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein said piece of luggage comprises one of a backpack, a suitcase, a briefcase, a computer bag, a duffel bag, an upright bag, a garment bag, and a shoulder bag.

21. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein said means for determining is configured to detect an amount of force applied to the means for lifting whenever the piece of luggage is lifted via the means for lifting.

22. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein said means for determining comprises one of a spring means, rotational dial means, an elastic means, a magnetic means, an electrical means, a chemical means, an electrochemical means and combinations thereof.

23. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein the means for providing an indication of said weight to a user comprises one a color coded means, numerical marking means, non-numerical markings means, and a digital display.

24. (previously presented) The mechanism of claim 19 wherein the means for providing an indication of said weight to a user comprises means to indicate a predetermined range of weights to a user.

25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) A weight determining mechanism for a piece of luggage, the mechanism comprising:

means for lifting said piece of luggage, said means for lifting being an integral part of said piece of luggage;

means for determining the weight of said piece of luggage, in response to an applied force on said means for lifting;

means for providing an indication of ~~said~~ the weight to a user;

wherein ~~said~~ the weight is distributed across said means for determining solely by lifting said means for lifting;

wherein the means for determining comprises a first end and a second end, each of the first and second ends being coupled to the piece of luggage, wherein ~~a weight~~ the weight of the

piece of luggage is carried across the means for determining when the piece of luggage is lifted via the means for lifting.

27. (cancelled)

28. (currently amended) A piece of luggage comprising:

a luggage container portion;

a generally flexible lifting element mounted to the luggage container portion and forming an integral part of the container portion;

an on-board weight determining mechanism permanently connected to the lifting element and subject to a load bearing weight of the container portion when lifted via the lifting element, the weight determining mechanism operable to determine the load bearing weight; and

a display mounted stationary to the luggage container portion, the display operatively coupled to the weight determining ~~element~~ mechanism to indicate, without a moving mechanical element, the load bearing weight to a user when the container portion is lifted via the lifting element.

29. (previously presented) A piece of luggage comprising:

a luggage container portion;

a generally flexible lifting element mounted to the luggage container portion and forming an integral part of the container portion;

an on-board weight determining element permanently connected across opposing ends of the lifting element, the weight determining element responsive to a load bearing weight of the container portion when lifted via the lifting element to determine the load bearing weight; and

a selectively operable indicator operatively coupled to the weight determining element to indicate information regarding the load bearing weight to a user when the container portion is lifted via the lifting element;

wherein the indicator comprises a digital display.

30. (cancelled)